

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/CS/CS/SB 1666 — Vessels

by Rules Committee; Community Affairs Committee; Environment and Natural Resources Committee; and Senators Flores and Pizzo

The bill revises provisions relating to vessels, specifically relating to the following issues:

- Boater safety education:
 - The bill establishes criteria for obtaining a temporary certificate for boater safety education which is valid for 90 days.
 - The bill provides that boating safety identification cards and temporary certificates may be issued in a digital, electronic, or paper format.
 - The bill authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to appoint agents to administer qualifying boating safety education and temporary certificate requirements. Agents must charge a \$2 fee and may charge a \$1 service fee for each boating safety education card or temporary certificate issued.
- Long-term stored vessels:
 - The bill defines the term “long-term stored vessel” to mean a vessel which has remained anchored or moored outside of a public mooring field without supervision or control for at least 30 days out of a 60-day period.
 - The bill requires FWC to conduct a study, contingent upon appropriation, on the impacts of long-term stored vessels on local communities and the state, and to present the report to the Governor and Legislature.
- No-discharge zones:
 - The bill authorizes, upon federal approval, counties designated as rural areas of opportunity to create within their jurisdiction a “no-discharge zone” where treated and untreated sewage discharges are prohibited for specified vessels.
 - The bill requires vessel operators within a no-discharge zone to keep sewage discharges onboard for discharge at specified locations.
 - The bill imposes a civil penalty if an unlawful discharge is made in a no-discharge zone.
- Vessel registration fees:
 - The bill requires a certain portion of vessel registration fees designated for use by the counties to be deposited into the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund to fund grants for derelict vessel removal. Undisbursed balances from vessel registration fees may be reapportioned to fund the Florida Boating Improvement Program or public boating access. Appropriated funds not utilized by local governments for derelict vessel removal by a certain time may be used by FWC to remove derelict vessels.
- Derelict vessels:
 - The bill prohibits a person who leaves or abandons a derelict vessel from residing or dwelling on the vessel until it is permanently removed from state waters or returned to waters in a non-derelict condition.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2019.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 114-0